

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee, on behalf of funding for  
medical interpretation services.

February 18, 2009

My name is Elizabeth Rosa; I reside at 316 Hilltop Road, Oakville CT. I am staff organizer for Naugatuck Valley Project in Waterbury. For the past 5 years I have been working with the English limited residents of the valley to secure better interpretation services in our local hospitals and clinics.

Medical Interpretation is a proven need as we have extended our work to speak with residents in the valley whose health have been in danger because of the need of better medical interpretation services. These are some of the stories that we have heard from some residents:

- "I waited so long in the waiting room for someone to show up to help me communicate that I miscarried my first child."
- "I have to wait for days before my husband or someone else could take off from work to help me with my appointments. This causes me to miss many appointments and limits a good follow with my doctor."
- "My son who is only a teenager and has to miss days of school to go and interpret for me, this is very uncomfortable for him as well as for me."
- "I was given a telephone to receive the interpretation service, but there are many situations that a face-to-face interpreter is the ideal form to provide this service."

The stories could go forever but who is listening? Today, someone is listening and I am very thankful for this opportunity.

I came to this country when I was 10 years old. I was an A student in my English class back in my country, but when I came to this state I was not able to speak a complete sentence in English. I found myself trying to interpret for my mother and this was not an easy task. Many years has come and gone and today children are in the same situation.

I am aware that it takes a few years to become fluent in another language and it is during that crucial time that patients need, the best medical interpretation services available. Why?, Because it is that service alone that could save their life.

The funding is needed for the hospitals who are already providing some of the services to continue doing their best to improve. A lot of work around this issue needs to be done. Not having the funds will hinder the health of many of our residents. I urge you today to say yes to keeping funding medical interpretation services.

*Thank You*  
*E. Rosa*